**REPORT TO**

 **PAGE COUNTY DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE**

 ***RECOMMENDED RESULTS AND ACTION PLAN***

***EMERGING FROM THE JANUARY 2022 SUMMIT***

**Executive Summary**

Our January Summit was designed to develop an action plan for PCDC for 2022 year and beyond. And though a snowstorm prevented us from meeting in person, we carried on by Zoom and collectively produced an impressive, preliminary list of ideas and goals. Since then, our Follow-Up Team--consisting of the facilitators of our four break-out sessions plus PCDC’s four officers— summarized these preliminary ideas in writing, and built out, refined and prioritized them. All this work now takes form in the following draft outline report.

We hope this combined effort receives the PCDC’s enthusiastic endorsement. Some of the report’s proposals have budgetary impact, many do not. Either way, we need the support of each and every one of you to make these plans a reality.

The following report outlines many plans that will help PCDC focus on local issues and bolster our image as an engaged partner, addressing local problems. Many of these plans require more volunteers than funds so I want to highlight the suggestion to establish a position of PCDC “Volunteer Coordinator.” Eric Benson effectively played this role in the 2020 campaign at our headquarters in downtown Luray. He matched the various talents and time constraints of people who “wanted to help” or to be “given something to do” with the needs HQ leaders identified, combining our strategy of tasks to accomplish with the resources to accomplish them. This kind of staff recruitment will be part of the Volunteer Coordinator job, as explained below.

We also are developing a year-long calendar of events, to assist in planning, keep people apprised of what’s going on each month, and maintain our visibility in the community year-round.

The Follow-Up Team decided that when selecting local issues to address, we should choose those that enable us to work on issues of broad public concern, in order to appeal not only to Democrats but also to Page citizens as a whole and to upgrade PCDC’s visibility and reputation in the community. Coordinating with other local organizations is also desirable, when feasible.

A few of the many suggested local activities listed in Section III of the report are, for example:

* Scholarships for graduating high school students
* Training sessions on “life skills” for residents, e.g., for first-time homebuyers
* Supporting the Tech Center
* Recognition awards in support of local programs and individuals PCDC wants to highlight and honor

That does not mean we will neglect supporting and promoting Democratic candidates for local, state, or national office. As Section V explains, we have solid plans to identify, recruit and support Democratic candidates for local offices and boards, to improve the data base on local voters so we can more effectively target our efforts, and to hold a series of events throughout the year. We also plan to operate a PCDC headquarters in Luray to support Jennifer Lewis’ run for Congress later this year.

The content of our Communications program will grow out of the activities we pursue on local issues and on supporting candidates for office. An organizational strength of PCDC is its highly-skilled set of people working on communications. One specific initiative is constructing billboard scaffolding on available properties throughout the County, where we can post large political campaign signs comparable to what local Republicans have done for years.

I want to thank all of the many who made the Summit a success and hope you join our Summit Follow-Up Session at the VFW on March 13 when our planning stage is completed and we begin putting our plans into action.

**Outline Report**

1. Overview
2. Background: The January Summit
3. Main messages from Anthony Flaccavento: build trust and credibility through PCDC’s engaging in concrete, local activity in the community, both nonpartisan and political
4. Summit included four break-out sessions:
5. Organizational self-assessment--PCDC’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats (“SWOT” analysis)
6. Key local issues
7. Communications program
8. Developing candidates for local office (elected and appointed )
9. Follow-Up Team’s work after the Summit
10. Distill, sharpen, prioritize general ideas from the Summit
11. Develop an action plan and calendar for 2022 and beyond
12. Complete draft report for PCDC to consider at March 3 monthly meeting
13. Key Themes
14. PCDC’s primary focus should revolve around
15. Addressing local issues as citizens with a viewpoint, in order to demonstrate PCDC is a trustworthy, solid member of the community, raise our profile and reputation, and combat demonization of Dems
16. Taking steps over the near, medium and long-term to increase Dem turnout and encourage more people to run as candidates for local elected and appointed office
17. PCDC’s major organizational features, plus and minus
18. Our limited membership and human resources influence which local issues we can realistically and effectively address.
19. Many county voters are receptive to at least some Dem perspectives (e.g., moderate Republicans, Independents and disengaged Dems) but hesitant or fearful to make that publicly known. This is both an opportunity for us—to tap into those groups—and a threat—insofar as they remain on the sidelines.
20. Criteria for selecting which local issues we realistically can and should address include:
21. Primarily local and of broad community concern (though not meant to exclude supporting candidates in election season and otherwise)
22. Feasible in budget and human resources
23. Collaborate with pre-existing local organizations when possible, both for resources and visibility
24. Sufficiently visible and impactful for the wider community to learn about our work and its value, if promoted through our communications program
25. Helps over time to encourage citizens to seek elected or appointed office
26. Whatever local initiatives we pursue require concrete, nuts & bolts “how to” plans, volunteers to execute them and mechanisms for linking individuals to the specific tasks involved. Putting in place a “Volunteer Coordinator” may help with that.
27. Rome wasn’t built in a day; our plans must be long term and success must be measured incrementally. Planting seeds is essential and worthwhile.
28. Key Conclusions re SWOT Analysis (PCDC’s Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats)
29. Our membership includes many individuals across a wide range of skills and experience. With well-designed programs, we can put that to good use.
30. Given the average age of our membership, seek to add younger people. Mechanisms for doing this are discussed below.
31. A major continuing threat is Republicans effectively demonizing Dems. This is worth keeping in mind when designing our local activities and communications program, because it significantly affects election results.
32. Develop a yearly calendar of events for PCDC in order to help
33. Planning and preparing for each event
34. Budgeting
35. Pacing of activities during the year
36. Inform our communications program
37. Fund-raising, to demonstrate that our activities are concrete and well-planned
38. Key Conclusions re Local Issues To Address and How
39. Overview
40. A first step is identifying key local issues; a following step is to identify which of those we’re capable of effectively addressing. Among key issues are:
41. Availability of quality healthcare in general
42. Availability of mental health services, including alcohol and drug abuse prevention
43. Economic development, including availability of jobs and job training, broadband, supporting small business
44. Environmental concerns, incl. Shen River, solar energy, other
45. Public education, including funding and challenges teachers face
46. Racial justice
47. Affordable housing
48. Realistically, PCDC is capable of addressing only certain of these local issues. So far, the most likely appear below in Sections B-G.
49. Some members of PCDC have volunteered to shape and implement main components of items B through H, below, and some have already begun preparations
50. PCDC can improve its capabilities by establishing a position of “Volunteer Coordinator” to link individuals with specific, manageable tasks concerning whichever activities we take on, among those itemized below. The Coordinator will prepare a list of tasks for volunteers and post those on our website and Facebook page, e.g., scheduling attendance at certain meetings of particular local governmental bodies, 2-hour shifts of door-to-door canvasing during campaign season, etc. The Coordinator will coordinate with PCDC members interested in any particular task to define it, so make it manageable and specific, not open-ended or vague. The Coordinator will also coordinate with the Communications Committee, to help publicize our activities to the larger local community.
51. Establish Scholarship Programs at both local high schools, in amounts and based on criteria to be determined, based on a refined proposal by the team that follows up on this. Preliminary indications are to fund this through a mechanism the School System has established to enable tax-deductible donations, which do not flow through PCDC itself.
52. Become a listed “partner” of the Tech Center by donating, e.g., $250-$500
53. Present an educational series on “life skills/how to” for particular local audiences
54. The model for this series consists of partnering with other local organizations (e.g., Page Memorial Hospital, Chamber of Commerce, local business), aiming at particular audiences (e.g., hospital employees), including PCDC members knowledgeable in the particular subjects, at low or no cost to PCDC, and building each session so it can be repeated to various audiences over time.
55. Examples
56. For first-time homebuyers: getting a mortgage
57. For small business owners and/or local employee groups—nuts & bolts of investing through your employment-based 401(k) or 403(b) defined contribution retirement plan
58. For employees who seek training and skills—nuts & bolts of opportunities through the statewide G3 program
59. Availability of valuable social services that are not widely known
60. Seek to support public schools, teachers and the school administration
61. Approach teachers’ association and superintendent to learn whether and what they believe we can constructively do
62. Communicate views through the Governor’s tipline, at: helpeducation@governor.virginia.gov
63. Little to no budgetary impact to PCDC
64. Solar House Tour in honor of Earth Day. Little to no budgetary impact.
65. Arrange “recognition awards” for local organizations, programs and individuals which PCDC wants to highlight and honor. These might be awarded at PCDC events, e.g., Annual Dinner, Pn’P, etc., may include cash awards and will be publicized through our communications effort. Examples include, e.g.,
66. The highly-successful Page County Solid Waste (recycling) program, potentially on Earth Day
67. Audre King/ West Recreation Center
68. PACA
69. Particular programs or individuals associated w public schools
70. Supporting the elderly
71. Facetime Saturdays,” where PCDC volunteers help nursing home residents connect with friends & family through Facetime or Zoom
72. Volunteering with a local hospice organization to support patients in Page County
73. Other suggestions for local activities that may be feasible
74. Developing topics for both/either Pizza n’ Politics (partisan sessions, aimed at Dems) and the Public Forum (nonpartisan and aimed at the wider public). Topics suggested at the Summit and after include, e.g., LGBTQ in Page County, status of broadband (esp’y for farmers), early voting in Virginia, update on the solar controversy. In considering these possible subjects, identify which are likely to help attract younger members to PCDC.
75. Fund-raisers through 5k walk/run events for specific causes.
76. Supporting veterans, e.g., through the VFW.
77. Sinkhole clean-up.
78. Supporting local business, e.g., participating in the pre-existing Buy Local campaign, welcome baskets to new businesses, developing an on-line scoreboard or tally to report Dem dollars spent on qualified “local businesses”
79. Monthly or quarterly contests for creating T-shirt slogans or bumper sticker slogans, with a prize of dinner for two at a local restaurant.
80. Encourage local residents to present funding ideas to their town council, using money from the American Rescue Plan Act.
81. Key Conclusions re Communications
82. Preliminary observations
83. The content of the Communications program grows out of the activities we pursue on local issues and on supporting candidates for office
84. An organizational strength of PCDC is its highly-skilled set of people working on communications
85. Identify activities we’re pursuing and develop targeted communications programs for each, e.g.,
86. Roadside clean-up
87. Scholarship programs
88. “Life skills/how to” sessions
89. Candidates we support
90. Others if and when they take form
91. Build scaffolding for billboards at select spots in the County, to match the very visible billboards Republicans use to great effect. Team working on this will develop a budget and identify willing property owners.
92. Develop an ongoing, local texting program to inform County residents about particular issues of local concern. The goal is to mobilize our voices and votes as those issues unfold, at local governmental meetings, e.g., Board of Supervisors, School Board, etc.
93. Key Conclusions re Developing Candidates for Office
94. Coordinate with Rural Ground Game on developing handbooks
95. Develop a “how to” manual for identifying and recruiting local citizens who—if properly approached—may be receptive to seeking local office (elected or appointed)
96. Develop a “how to” manual to support candidates who seek local elected or appointed office on the practical steps for doing so. This will include, e.g., filing requirements, terms of office, duties, campaign funding and communications, policy platforms, etc.
97. Routinely attend meetings of local governmental bodies to learn who else attends and improve our understanding of local issues. This may help identify people who are interested in the issues and open to considering public office.
98. Develop better data on Page County voters to identify registered voters who may be receptive to Dem candidates but typically don’t vote. Then implement a postcard campaign and other communications to reach out to them. (Some have already volunteered to help develop better data). The postcard campaign is already included in the 2022 budget).
99. Establish a headquarters in Luray to support Jennifer Lewis’ run for U.S. Congress, from late August through Election Day in November. Use experience from 2020 HQ to guide that operation. Estimated gross budget of $3000, based on that experience.